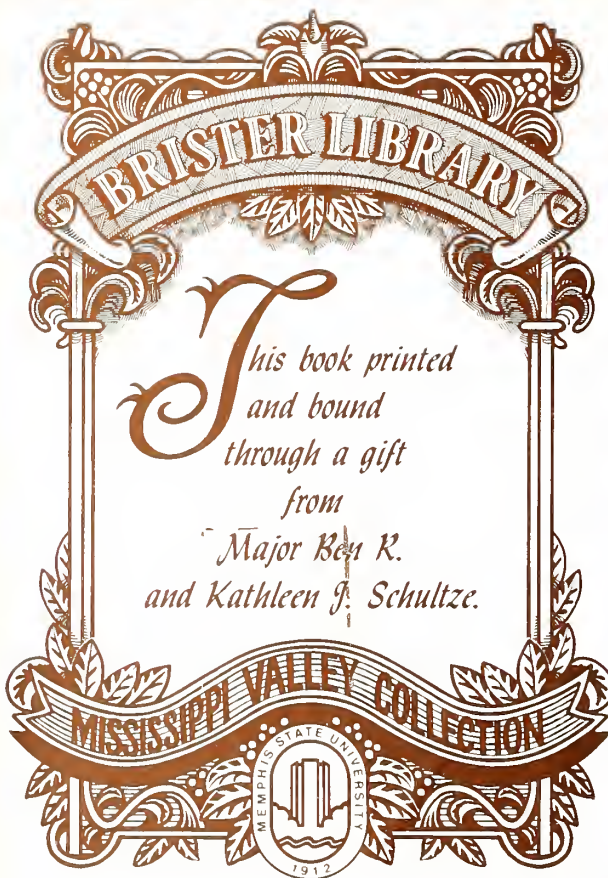


RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY
INTERVIEWS WITH
COLONEL PICKLE AND TRABUE LEWIS

BY - CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER - BETTY WILLIAMS
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY



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RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICAL HISTORY
INTERVIEWS WITH COLONEL PICKLE AND TRABUE LEWIS
MARCH 14, 1980

BY CHARLES W. CRAWFORD
TRANSCRIBER - BETTY WILLIAMS
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE
MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Lewis

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

I hereby release all right, title, or interest in and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the Mississippi Valley Archives of the John Willard Brister Library of Memphis State University and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and published by the said Archives, which also may assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

PLACE Nashville, TN
DATE March 14, 1980.

Isabel Lewis

(INTERVIEWEE)

Charles W. Crawford

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives
of the John Willard Brister Library
of Memphis State University)

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE

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PLACE

Northumb, TN.

DATE

March 14, 1980.X Sam m. Pickle

(INTERVIEWEE)

Charles W. Craft

(For the Mississippi Valley Archives
of the John Willard Brister Library
of Memphis State University)

THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THIS PROJECT IS "A HISTORY OF RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICS (PARTICULARLY THE ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICE OF GOVERNOR JIM NANCE McCORD)." THE PLACE IS NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS MARCH 14, 1980. THE INTERVIEW IS WITH MR. TRABUE LEWIS AT DEMOCRATIC PARTY HEADQUARTERS. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE. TRANSCRIBED BY MRS. BETTY WILLIAMS.

DR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Lewis, let's get a little information about Governor McCord today from your recollections of him. Can we start with the time you first met Jim Nance McCord?

MR. LEWIS: I first met Governor McCord in 1942 when he was a candidate for the United States Congress. In '44 when he came back to Tennessee to run for governor I was assigned to him as an aide during that campaign.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who assigned you to Governor McCord?

MR. LEWIS: Commissioner Lynn Bomar.

DR. CRAWFORD: Commissioner Lynn Bomar?

MR. LEWIS: Highway Patrol. We didn't do a big lot of campaigning that year because it was during the war and he had no opposition. We just visited East Tennessee once

I believe it was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that the campaign in 1944?

MR. LEWIS: 'Forty-four. If I remember correctly that campaign cost less than \$5,000.

DR. CRAWFORD: Seems strange now, campaigns can cost so much more!

MR. LEWIS: Oh, yes. I went on with him and then when the November elections come up we made about one trip around the state and that was it--just East Tennessee and West Tennessee. I always admired him very much. We got along very well. You wouldn't want to be with a more congenial man than him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you were with him all times during the day and night I am sure when you traveled and went all over the state.

MR. LEWIS: If you were going some place to take him to some private home where you wasn't invited to have dinner he would usually give me the money to eat on and I ain't never taken any change back. I never could get him to take his money back.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was the time you first met him and where were you?

MR. LEWIS: The first time I met him? It was in Nashville in 1942 when he was a candidate for Congress.

We had a pretty close relationship from then on.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were assigned to him then?

MR. LEWIS: Not when he was running for Congress but assigned when he was running for governor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where were you when you first met him, was it at a meeting or something?

MR. LEWIS: I met him over at the Hermitage Hotel at the Democratic Headquarters.

DR. CRAWFORD: Had you ever seen him before?

MR. LEWIS: Oh yes, I saw him. . . The first time I ever saw Governor McCord was in 1933 and he was selling some Jersey cattle out here Dr. Ford's farm on Gallatin Road.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you do on Gallatin Road?

MR. LEWIS: I was on patrol when I was out there. We went by there to handle the traffic at that sale. He was selling the cattle and that was the first time I ever spoke to him. After he was elected governor, I believe, I've told this before about living out there at the mansion.

DR. CRAWFORD: No, sir. We didn't get that on the record, I believe.

MR. LEWIS: Well, in 1945 when he was inaugurated governor, Governor Cooper moved back to Shelbyville. I was out there at the governor's mansion out here on West End Avenue, 2118 was the number.

DR. CRAWFORD: 2118 West End.

MR. LEWIS: The house needed painting and a right smart of

repairs on the inside. He and Mrs. McCord lived at the Hermitage and I lived out there for about two months till they got through decorating the place. So from then on I was with him just about everytime he made a trip anywhere in an automobile, train, flying or however he went, I was with him.

DR. CRAWFORD: You traveled everywhere with him then.

MR. LEWIS: Every place. We made lots of trips over this state in an automobile. I remember one time when we were down in West Tennessee at Somerville at a Lions' Club luncheon. I don't recall the man's name, but in the introduction of Governor McCord I'll always remember one thing he said. He said it was in Nashville a few weeks ago and the streets were all dug up. And He said, "I asked Governor McCord, 'What in the world were all the streets being dug up here?'" And he said, "Ed Crump was up here the other day and lost his watch and going to dig up the town up to find his watch." (Laughter) That's a true story--that's what he told him!

DR. CRAWFORD: That was a joke that was told down there?

MR. LEWIS: That's a joke that was told at that Lions' Club luncheon in Somerville.

DR. CRAWFORD: You drove the car for the governor, didn't you wherever you went with him? Had you ever been on duty at a bridge anywhere when you met him before?

MR. LEWIS: No, I don't think so.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was the auction that you had seen him the

first time?

MR. LEWIS:

That's right. I do recollect one time that

I was at a toll bridge at Tennessee River between Camden and Waverly. And he was coming from West Tennessee driving to Nashville himself and stopped at a pay toll and I was standing there and we had a little conversation there.

DR. CRAWFORD:

That was before he ran for Congress?

MR. LEWIS:

That was before he ran for Congress. He was an auctioneer. He was a man when he was due at a place he never wanted to be late. He would tell me especially when we were campaigning if we were in one town and needed to be some other place in thirty or forty minutes, he knew that I knew about how long it took to get there. He'd tell me, "Trab, when time comes to leave you come get me by the arm and we'll leave." So I practiced that all the time. So one time we were in Dickson and needed to be in Waverly in thirty minutes I knew it took about twenty to thirty minutes to get there so I'd go around and tell him, "Governor, we got to go to so-in-so at such time." He says, "Boys, I've got to go, Trab says it's time to go." That's what he would say. If he was living he'd tell you, that [in] four years that he was governor we never were more than five minutes late on any appointment he had.

DR. CRAWFORD:

You were probably a lot of help to him for it is hard for a candidate or a governor to get away from a meeting when so many people want to talk with him.

MR. LEWIS: That's right. You have to go in and go on.

 We canvassed this state. We made that round in '44 in the primary and then in November elections. Then in '46 we had a pretty tough campaign. Governor Browning qualified to run and he was over in Europe. We won that race and then that fall campaign and I remember that campaign in Albert Gore's district. Albert was one of these guys that was always standing and talk all day and never get started. Finally one day I told Albert, I said, "We like to be on time, Mr. Congressman, when we get ready to go let's go-let's don't keep standing there and talking."

 So we never had no more trouble about being late cause I knew Governor McCord wanted to be on time and I'm just one of these people that like to be on time. I think that is one thing that he liked about me. If he told me that he wanted to leave the house by 7 o'clock in the morning I'd be there about twenty minutes till seven. I'd be setting' there ready to go. I always made it a point not to have to stop with him to get gas. While he was visiting with somebody I'd go fill the car up. He liked to be very prompt about everything. He wanted everything running smooth and another thing he didn't want to fool around. I know you'd be going down the road and there would be somebody draggin' along at 30 miles an hour or twenty and you couldn't pass in a place and he'd make the remark, "He's not going anywhere and he doesn't want anybody else to."

DR. CRAWFORD: He didn't like to be late.

MR. LEWIS: Oh no, he wasn't going to be late. He just

didn't like that.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of car did you travel in?

MR. LEWIS: Cadillac-seven passenger Cadillac-state car.

DR. CRAWFORD: You'd had a lot of experience driving as a highway patrolman, hadn't you?

MR. LEWIS: I started in 1930 on the Highway Patrol.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of cars did you use then?

MR. LEWIS: On patrols? Motorcycles--they didn't have any cars.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you change to cars?

MR. LEWIS: We didn't get to cars before 1938.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, you'd had a lot of practice traveling in Tennessee.

MR. LEWIS: Oh yeah, I've been all over the state. I guess there's not many school houses I haven't been in in this state on political campaigns.

I remember, we were campaigning down in Congressman Cooper's district one time and Judge Tip Taylor was running for the Public Service Commission. Of course, Mr. Cooper was quite an orator and Governor McCord and they would both speak and Tip would speak and Tip finally told them one day, "I don't want to speak after you two fellows, [he] said, "I sound like a school boy after you people." (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: What did Governor McCord do while he was traveling? Was he able to do any paper work

or did he rest or what?

MR. LEWIS: He could sleep better in the car than he could in the bed. He never would ride in the back seat. He'd always ride up front with me.

DR. CRAWFORD: He must have had a lot of confidence in your driving.

MR. LEWIS: I don't think that bothered him a great deal. My driving didn't, because he never complained.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he ever do any paper work or speeches while he traveled?

MR. LEWIS: He never prepared any speeches. He just spoke from the cuff about anything or whatever he was going to speak on.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of speaker was he? How would you describe him?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I thought he was the best I ever heard. I just wish you could have heard him.

DR. CRAWFORD: What was good about his speeches?

MR. LEWIS: I expect his delivery was one of the best things. He had a great voice. He could speak like Crosby could sing. He just got up and went to talking. He never hesitated when he got up to speak, he just got up and it rolled out.

DR. CRAWFORD: He had a lot of experience as an auctioneer, didn't he?

MR. LEWIS: Yeah, and he was just a gifted speaker. I would describe him like some good musician.

He was just gifted to that--very much so.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he tell stories, or use quotations or what did he put in his speeches?

MR. LEWIS: He'd tell stories and quote a lot of poetry and things of that nature.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did the audience react to his speeches?

MR. LEWIS: Oh fine. I never will forget the time right after--it was just about the first week in the Governor's office one day the FBI was having a school here in Nashville for sheriffs and peace officers, chiefs of police and things. They wanted him to come down at noon and speak. I went over there and picked him up and he said, "Trab what am I supposed to talk about down there today?" I said, "Just anything you want to talk about. It's just a bunch of police and peace officers and people of that kind." He got down there and got to telling jokes and they like to tore the house down.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he like to tell a lot of jokes in his speeches.

MR. LEWIS: Oh speeches like that he would, you know. I've been with him when he conducted funerals, I've been with him in churches [and] he could preach a good sermon.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now tell me something about his sermons? What kind of sermons did he preach?

MR. LEWIS: He'd stay right by the Bible. He'd take a chapter of the Bible and read it and then point out what it meant. (He was) very good about it. Very good. He was quite a Bible scholar.

DR. CRAWFORD: How were his funerals?

MR. LEWIS: Well, he could make some of the nicest remarks, I believe I ever heard, set to old English in words of that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he find time to do that while he was Governor--to give sermons and preach funerals?

MR. LEWIS: He worked at it. I'll tell you about my story about the last speech he made in the campaign in '48 when he was defeated. He was going to speak in his home town of Lewisburg at the courthouse one evening after dinner. Of course, he had some opposition at home like any man always has. Apparently, I didn't know he was going to do it, I remember one thing he said that night. He said, "I've been good enough to represent you people here as mayor, I've been good enough [for you] to come to Sunday School over there, I've been good enough to hold your father's and mother's funerals, and it seems to me like I should be good enough to get your vote for governor."

DR. CRAWFORD: And that was from his speech there?

MR. LEWIS: And that was his last speech he made in that '48 campaign. We come on back to Nashville and the election was the next day. He had some people down there that

I think had made some remarks about him and he just put it right to them.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever see him lose his temper?

MR. LEWIS: Well, one of the times that I think he was about as mad as I ever saw him--and there were very few times that I saw him the least bit fretted--we were on our way to Chattanooga one morning, left here early. I think he had about two other people with him--there was about four of us. We stopped in Tullahoma to eat breakfast--we left here real early. It was just about a week or two after the sales tax went into effect. When we got ready to leave, somehow or other he got hold of the check. I usually got the check and paid it somehow, but he picked it up and walked up there to the cash register and there weren't very many in the restaurant, probably four or five other people. When the man rang it up he said, "One cent for Jim McCord, one cent for Ed Crump." I don't think he appreciated that remark very much and he said, "Young man, my name is Jim McCord and I have the money to pay the check, but we won't bother you any more."

DR. CRAWFORD: He had a very good temper then if that is the only thing like that that you ever saw.

MR. LEWIS: Well, that's about it.

DR. CRAWFORD: Some Tennessee governors have had a pretty mean temper, you know.

MR. LEWIS: You telling me! (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: You've worked with quite a few governors,

haven't you?

MR. LEWIS: I've worked with Governor McAllister, Governor Browning, Governor Cooper, Governor McCord, Governor Browning (the second round), Clement, Ellington.

DR. CRAWFORD: You have worked with a lot of them, Mr. Lewis. How did Governor McCord's temper compare with Governor Cooper's?

MR. LEWIS: About like daylight and dark! (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever travel with Governor Cooper?

MR. LEWIS: Yeah. He and I left here, and his mother was with us, one day during the war (World War II) going to Johnson City. The speed limits were 35 miles per hour.

DR. CRAWFORD: It was war time.

MR. LEWIS: War time speed. I didn't know whether he wanted to travel 35 or go all. Before we got out of town I asked about this. He said, "Sergeant, we haven't got time to be fooling around." Well, I knew that meant to go on. So we get into Knoxville and he was the type man that would never tell you where he was going, he just kept telling you which road to take. We got to Knoxville and he said he wanted to go by the Andrew Johnson Hotel. Well, he went in and his mother stopped off there. We went on to Johnson City. By that time it was about dark. We got out there to a little filling station out on the other side of Knoxville, and I told him I'm going to have to get some gas. While I was getting the gas, he went

in and he got about a pound of cheese and a loaf of bread, nothing to drink. We got back in the car and started and he made me a cheese sandwich out of bread and nothing to drink, you know, so I was about to choke to death on that sandwich (laughter). To tell you the truth I was afraid to throw it out, cause I was afraid he'd say something about it, so I ate on that sandwich till we got to Johnson City that was about a hundred miles. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: Before you got a drink?

MR. LEWIS: So we went on to Johnson City and he had me to carry him up to Judge Cox's. I carried him up there and came back and checked into the hotel. He told me to get him a room in the hotel too. So in a few minutes he called back and said, "I'm going to spend the night up at Judge Cox's. Just cancel out my reservation.

DR. CRAWFORD: Who was that where he was staying?

MR. LEWIS: Judge Thad Cox. Have you interviewed anyone on him?

DR. CRAWFORD: On Prentice Cooper? Yes sir, several people so I know some about him before.

MR. LEWIS: I was thinking of one old man that lives in Nashville that was one of his commissioners named Paul Savage. But he's about the only one of his commissioners that I know that is living.

DR. CRAWFORD: I'd like to call him sir.

MR. LEWIS: His name is Paul Savage. I think he is originally from Lauderdale County, but his home in in Nashville. Governor McCord was a type man that I always felt like was too good to be a good politician. I remember one time we were in a meeting up there in his first term. It was right after the war--talking about regulating traffic--it was a safety meeting. They were talking about what they were going to do and somebody (I don't remember who it was) spoke up and said I don't think that would be a good thing to do politically, Governor. He said, "Listen it doesn't make any difference if I'm re elected Governor, that's not important. The administration I'm running today is what is important." "My reelection in not important."

DR. CRAWFORD: It seems like a very statesman-like view though.

MR. LEWIS: It was. He was a southern gentleman, up one side and down the other. Of all the men I've ever been associated with in public life he is number 1. He's just got to be for being a gentleman.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you admire him personally?

MR. LEWIS: Oh yes, oh yes. Very much. He was just real good to me.

DR. CRAWFORD: How old were you when you first started working with him?

MR. LEWIS: Forty-four.

DR. CRAWFORD: He never had a son, did he?

MR. LEWIS: No, he didn't have any children. He was just as

good to me as if I had been his son. Well if I was with him and we stopped in to buy a hat, and he bought a hat. He bought me a hat or if he was buying shirts he bought me a shirt, if he bought a tie, he bought me a tie. If he bought a suit he bought me a suit. How could I say anything about a man like that!

DR. CRAWFORD: He was very generous.

MR. LEWIS: What are you talking about--yes sir! When I was with him at any kind of public meeting, sometimes I didn't like it because he would take me up there to the head table and make me sit with him. (Laughter) Of course it was quite an honor for him to do that, but there were times I would have just rather not been up there. If he went to some civic club or something like that, in his speech he would make some remark about who was with him. He would always have something good to say about me. He couldn't have been greater to me than he was.

DR. CRAWFORD: You saw quite a few Tennessee governors, Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: Yes sir. I named them a while ago the ones I was with. All the governors have treated me fine. I knew from Governor Horton all the way through until Dunn was governor, I could meet one of them on the street and he'd speak to me and call me by my first name--Governor Horton all the way through.

DR. CRAWFORD: You've seen a lot of Tennessee governors.

MR. LEWIS: I had an assignment one Sunday that he told me that he wanted to send to the Supreme Court.

One of the justices was from Columbia, Tennessee, Tom Anderson. He had invited the other four down there to his house for dinner on Sunday. Governor McCord asked me if I'd take his car and take them down there. I told him I'd be glad to. I did. And I never shall forget those fellows were kidding me and said, "What do you carry a gun for?" I said, "I don't know, its part of the uniform". So they said, "Well, that's all right." But then they got very serious and said, "Well, Trabue, we know you got to have it and carry it, but just don't ever use it but when you have to." But [they] said, "If there is somebody running from you, there's always another day to catch him. You don't have to shoot at him." I thought that was good advice from four Supreme Court Justices.

DR. CRAWFORD: You served in uniform when you worked for the governor.

MR. LEWIS: Most of the time. This day and time they don't. I wore a uniform just about all the time.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were the roads like then?

MR. LEWIS: Of course we had no super highways, but I'd have to say the roads were reasonably good roads. I could drive from here to Memphis in about 3 hours and 45 minutes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Even on the highways then.

MR. LEWIS: On the highways then.

DR. CRAWFORD: You made good time.

MR. LEWIS: Well I tried to stay around 70 all the time, if Mrs. McCord wasn't along. If she was along she

would get up front and if you got to running too fast she'd go to beat you on the legs--"slow down". (Laughter) So we were coming from Asheville, North Carolina, one day we flew into Knoxville pretty quick and Mrs. McCord said, "Hmpt, how we get here so quick?" Governor McCord said, "If you'll stay asleep, we'll be in Nashville pretty quick." (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: What sort of places did he stay when he traveled?

MR. LEWIS: The best. That's one of the great things about him, he'd say, "Trab, it doesn't cost but just a little more to go first class." He stayed in the best. He'd eat in the places and he believed in having the best clothes you could buy.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he get much work done when he traveled?

Did he try to work at his hotel any?

MR. LEWIS: Oh yes. He would work quite a bit at the hotel and things like that. I remember one time we were in Knoxville at a hotel and he was meeting with a couple of fellows and one of them made the remark and said, "We would rather this was a secret meeting." Governor McCord said, "What do you mean?" Well they said, "Just you and I and this other fellow." He (Governor McCord) said, "Listen, Trab, is with me, and he can hear anyghing that you fellows have got to tell me." "I don't want to hear anyghing he can't hear." I don't know what they wanted. If you were with him you were with him. It didn't make any difference.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he take any members of his staff with him often when he traveled?

MR. LEWIS: Well, he would take his administrative assistant, Fred Graves with him a lot.

DR. CRAWFORD: Fred Graves?

MR. LEWIS: Fred Graves-- G R A V E S. And Barry Tarkley he take along.

DR. CRAWFORD: Barrett Tarkley, what was his position?

MR. LEWIS: Well, Barrett started out as his administrative assistant with him in Washington and worked with him in the Governor's office and there was Attorney General's vacancy come down here and Barrett wanted it and he appointed him to that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Tarkley was Attorney General?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, he was a lawyer and the Governor appointed him Attorney General. He thought a lot of Barrett. He went to Barrett for legal advice on everything--he (Governor McCord) was not a lawyer himself.

DR. CRAWFORD: How were Governor McCord's relations with Mr. Crump?

MR. LEWIS: Well, it was very good. Now I remember when the sales tax question came up and Governor McCord went to Memphis a couple or three times to discuss the sales tax with Mr. Crump, Governor McCord and his staff, coming back on the second trip I remember those people discussing it. They said Mr. Crump said, "I'm not going to fight you, but I won't support it. But you go ahead and if you can get it through, our people won't support it, but we won't fight you." And they passed the sales tax.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was one of his big contributions to Tennessee, one of Governor McCord's. Did you go into the meetings with Mr. Crump? Do you remember who went down with Governor McCord to that meeting about the sales tax?

MR. LEWIS: Yes. Joe Carr, and Frank Hobbs, Fred Graves and I believe that was all. Mr. Frank Hobbs was Chairman of the Democratic Party at that time--State Chairman.

DR. CRAWFORD: Is he still living?

MR. LEWIS: No.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Mr. Crump give Governor McCord good support during his last campaign in '48?

MR. LEWIS: Yes sir.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did it not help as much that time?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I'll tell you what. You know they fell out with Senator Tom Stewart and they wouldn't support Stewart--The Crump bunch wouldn't. They told them to get some other candidate. Well, they got Judge John Mitchell up here at Cookeville. Tom Stewart was very popular outside of Shelby County throughout the state. Well, these people a lot of them, got mad at the Crump organization because they wouldn't support Stewart, and they just kind of split the thing up. And Browning was pretty popular in those days and Kefauver was elected for the senate and beat Stewart and Browning beat McCord and it was because of that split between Shelby County and Tom Stewart and that didn't. And if it hadn't been for that split--if they had supported

Stewart and McCord--they would have both won.

DR. CRAWFORD: That would have been a winning ticket.

MR. LEWIS: That would have been a winning ticket.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know why Mr. Crump fell out with Stewart?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I don't think he did as much as General Gerber did.

DR. CRAWFORD: Will Gerber?

MR. LEWIS: My understanding is. . . (Tom Stewart told me this himself afterward--he and I lived in the same apartment house after he came back to Nashville from the senate to practice law.) He said, "There was an immigration bill up there in the senate and just didn't think it was good business to vote for it." Gerber got mad at him cause he voted against it. Gerber poisoned Shelby County against him and that was one of the things.

DR. CRAWFORD: That was while Stewart was in Washington?

MR. LEWIS: While he was in the senate. And another thing: the Shelby delegation went to the '48 Convention and they were opposed to President Truman. Who they wanted, I don't remember. Anyway they were against him and Tom Stewart was a delegate and he supported him (Truman) and that made them a little mad. He (Senator Stewart) told me, "I served in the Senate there and right across the aisle from Truman and he was as good a friend as I ever had in the Senate and how in the hell could I sit there in the Convention and vote against him when he and I were personal friends on the Senate floor."

DR. CRAWFORD: Besides he was a regular Democratic candidate, wasn't he?

MR. LEWIS: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: And Senator Stewart just felt he couldn't oppose him.

MR. LEWIS: He told me, "I wasn't going to oppose him--the President of the United States". I don't know who they were pushing, they were just against him. (Truman)

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, it didn't work, Truman got the nomination that year.

MR. LEWIS: Truman got the nomination and won the election. Everybody said he was going to lose, but he didn't.

I remember in that November election Governor McCord was filling the Governor's office. They had a kind of Southeastern meeting over at Raleigh, North Carolina, and we went over there. I remember very well one thing that Truman said. Everybody thought that Truman was going to lose you know. Truman told Governor McCord he said, "Jim, I'm going to beat the hell out of that Dewey."

DR. CRAWFORD: And he was right.

MR. LEWIS: He was right--he did. I never will forget that.

Of course Governor McCord had been up there in Congress and he was in the Senate and they had met and knew each other and he said, "Jim, how is everything in Tennessee?" Governor McCord said, "We're behind down there, Mr. President." He (President Truman) said, "I'm going to beat the hell out of this Dewey."

DR. CRAWFORD: So far as you know there was nothing else involved in the break between Senator Stewart and Mr. Crump except the Democratic Convention and the bill in Washington?

MR. LEWIS: I'm not so sure that it was all the way Mr. Crump; I think General Gerber poisoned Mr. Crump with Stewart. Mr. Crump was getting old and Gerber wanted to be bully of the woods, you know. That's what elected Kefauver.

DR. CRAWFORD: And that was the part then in the defeat of Governor McCord.

MR. LEWIS: That's exactly what tore up the Crump machine-- that '48 election.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, I believe as a Tennessee historian that the Crump machine was never as powerful after that as it had been before.

MR. LEWIS: There's a book that tells about that '48 election. I can't think of the name of it. I've got a copy of it out at the house. It's got a story in it about that '48 election. Have you ever read that thing?

DR. CRAWFORD: I'm not sure what book it is, sir. I've read several things about it.

MR. LEWIS: It's got old man Crump's picture in it. Who was that fellow that wrote that book? I had it up here for a long time but I was afraid people would carry it off and I took it home.

DR. CRAWFORD: If you remember the name of the book, you can tell me later.

MR. LEWIS: The next time we meet I'll have the name of the book and it will be a good one for you to read.

DR. CRAWFORD: I'd be glad to do it. Where was Governor McCord when the election returns came in in 1948 when he was defeated?

MR. LEWIS: He was out here at the Governor's mansion on West End Avenue.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did he react to that defeat?

MR. LEWIS: Well, of course any man hates to get defeated, but he just took it on the chin and laughed about it, and went on back to the Governor's office at 7 o'clock the next morning.

DR. CRAWFORD: He's had two good terms as governor.

MR. LEWIS: Oh yes, very good. He enjoyed it very much. He felt he had done a lot for education when he put that 2% sales tax in.

DR. CRAWFORD: He certainly did.

MR. LEWIS: Because in his '48 campaign see, they throwed that at him pretty hard--the sales tax. He'd say, "I stand or fall on the sales tax as is." You know some of them wanted to take it off of food and fuel and things like that. And he said, "No, I am not going to recommend anything like that. I am going to

stand on the sales tax as is." He discussed that a lot--that sales tax. I've heard him talk a lot about that sales tax. He said he didn't know what else to do when the legislature met in '47. But said we couldn't open the schools in September of '47 if it hadn't been for that sales tax money.

DR. CRAWFORD: They had to have money from someplace.

MR. LEWIS: He said that was the only place that he knew to go get it and get it quick.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he ever know why Mr. Crump didn't like a sales tax?

MR. LEWIS: Old man Crump always said they boasted down there about not having a sales tax, you know, that they operated their county well without it. You know, McAlister in 1935 opposed the sales tax. They beat him in the legislature on it you know. That's when Crump made the remark about McAlister. "Anybody that will support a sales tax will milk his neighbor's cow through a crack in the fence." Have you ever heard that one?

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes sir. That's why it was such an accomplishment for Governor McCord to get him to change and not oppose it.

MR. LEWIS: Governor McCord just laid it on the line like it was. Do you want the schools to open or don't you want them to open? Mr. Crump's decision was: We won't support it; but we won't oppose it.

MR. LEWIS: Was Governor McCord happy on the way back from

that trip?

MR. LEWIS: Yeah, in pretty good spirits.

DR. CRAWFORD: When he was traveling, did he have a lot of appointments close to one another or did people come to see him mainly?

MR. LEWIS: Well, on trips we tried to set things up where we could see as many people as we could, see, on one trip around over the country. He usually had pretty good audience wherever he went to speak. He wouldn't break an appointment--I'll tell you what happened. In 1947 he had an engagement to speak to a Business Women's Club at Milan, Tennessee. And Saturday night a week ago was fine weather. We left here one evening about 1 o'clock. When we got to Milan, it took us about 5 hours to get down there. We went on and he spoke to this women's organization and we got away from there about 9 o'clock that night and it was three o'clock in the morning I pulled up here at the mansion. It took us about six hours to come back. Snow was about a foot deep, snowing so hard you couldn't see. As we were going down some of them radioed down to a patrolman down there at Dickson and told us that the flag was down and the weather was getting worse, better turn around and come back. He said, "Tell them the weather is no worse further down the road than it is here."



THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY
THIS PROJECT IS "A HISTORY OF RECENT TENNESSEE POLITICS". THE PLACE
IS NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. THE DATE IS MARCH 14, 1980. THE INTERVIEW
IS WITH TOM McCORD PICKLE, RETIRED U.S.ARMY. PRESENT WAS MR. TRABUE
LEWIS. THE INTERVIEW IS BY DR. CHARLES W. CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR OF THE
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH OFFICE OF MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY. THE TRANS-
SCRIPTION IS BY BETTY WILLIAMS.

DR. CRAWFORD: Col. Pickle, let's start with some information
 about your life. Would you give a brief bi-
ography of yourself? You might start with where and when you were born
and anything about your relatives that are appropriate and mention your
early life, education and experience until your retirement in Nashville.

COL. PICKLE: I was born on the 19th day of December, 1915,
 in Bedford County, Tennessee. My mother was
Annie McCord Pickle, who was the sister of Jim Nance McCord. My father
was Robert Evans Pickle. I attended the public schools in Bedford County,
graduating from the Central High School of Shelbyville in 1934. I left
the farm and worked with a chain grocery company in the meat market for
about three years and then was employed in 1939 by the state of Tennessee
as a purchasing clerk in the state Purchasing Department. I was inducted
into the Army Air Corps through the Selective Service System on April 6,

1942. I attended the Quartermaster Officer Candidate School at Camp Lee, Virginia and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in April of 1943. I was then assigned to the Army Air Corps and served in various capacities including fifteen months in Italy during World War II. At the end of World War II, I was a member of the Tennessee National Guard assigned to the Selective Service section and was called to active duty in September of 1950. I served in Tennessee in various capacities including three years from '56 to '59, as the State Director of Selective Service. In June of 1959 I was transferred to Washington, D.C. and served in the National Headquarters of Selective Service in various capacities, the last seven years of which were Chief of the Administrative Division. I was retired on the 31st day of May in 1970 from the Army. Since that time I have worked with the Army Corps of Engineers for a period of approximately five years, and a short time in New Orleans in the Department of Energy. I am now retired and live in Davidson County, Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Col. Pickle, since we are interested especially in your uncle, Jim Nance McCord, who became governor, could you start with your first recollections of your uncle.

COL. PICKLE: The first recollection I have of my uncle is about 1920. He came to our home in an automobile and took my mother and myself and sisters for a ride in a car.

DR CRAWFORD: You would have been about five years old then?

COL. PICKLE: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: And he would have ~~just~~ been starting his work

as auctioneer.

COL. PICKLE: That's right. I think this was about the time he finished his auctioneering work.

DR. CRAWFORD: He had been away to Chicago to school.

COL. PICKLE: That's right.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you remember that he looked like then? What did you think of him as a very young child?

COL. PICKLE: Well, I think in one word that most accurately describes my uncle is "gentleman". He never at any time portrayed any characteristic other than that.

DR. CRAWFORD: Then what other contact did you have with him, say, in your earlier years?

COL. PICKLE: He often times came over from Lewisburg to visit us in our home when we lived on the family farm there in Bedford County. On occasion we would go to Lewisburg to visit him.

DR. CRAWFORD: How long had that farm been in the family?

COL. PICKLE: My grandmother inherited the farm from her father's estate when it was established. Now that particular tract of land had been purchased by him. There were other tracts of land in the estate that he had homesteaded, but this particular one had been purchased. My grandmother acquired it in 1913, I believe.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever go with him to any of his auctions?

COL. PICKLE: Oh yes. There was one story that he told of

how he got his start as an auctioneer. He went to Birmingham, Alabama to an auction sale by the American Jersey Cattle Association. He spent the night in the hotel. The next morning he bought a paper as he was going into the dining room. The paper headlines announced the government report on cotton production, which showed a tremendous forecast for harvest that year, which meant immediately that the bottom would fall out of the cotton market. His immediate thought was--what a horrible thing to break on the day of this auction.

He went to the auction and he was working as a ring man on taking bids and passing them to the auctioneer. They put the first cow in the ring and practically gave it away--no bids. They put the second cow in the ring and it was almost a repeat. On the third cow they invited another man who was also an auctioneer and working in the ring come up and try his hand. He had no success either.

The fourth cow they invited Uncle Jim to come up to try his hand as an auctioneer. They brought the cow in the ring and he said, "Now listen. Before we start to sell this cow I want to talk to you about something that I know is on the mind of every one of you." He said, "I read the paper this morning and I know you have too and you know that the bottom is falling out of the cotton market today. I want you to know right now that we're selling a Jersey cow which will produce milk and there isn't a surplus of milk in the southland today and here is an opportunity to buy something that will be increasing in value." He sold the cow and got a fairly decent price for it and he concluded that he sold all the

rest of the cows in the auction. The president of The Jersey Cattle Association was in the audience and he hired him immediately after the sale and he sold every imported Jersey cow in Tennessee and Canada after that day.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know where and about when that incident took place?

COL. PICKLE: I don't know--it was in Birmingham, Alabama but I don't know the date. I have heard Jim tell that story.

MR. LEWIS: It was in '20.

COL. PICKLE: In '20?

MR. LEWIS: That was the first sale after he came back from auctioneering school in Chicago. He and this fellow named Wallace--Judge Wallace--went down there to have this sale. Like you say, after the sale these Jersey people come around and contacted him wanting him to have these sales in Canada and the United States. You said Tennessee, but it was the whole United States. He went all over the country--California and New Jersey.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, agriculture was not in very good shape in the twenties, but he had a job that ought to have been successful, handling all the Jersey sales in the country. Did he have to travel a great deal in those years?

COL. PICKLE: Oh yes. He jokingly said that he never had his suitcase unpacked, because he was traveling all the time.

DR. CRAWFORD: I suspect that was about true. What about the family background, could you give some sort of family background for a few generations before Governor McCord's time?

COL. PICKLE: Well, the first record we have was of a Grandfather, James McCord, who was from Scotland and he was killed in a battle in 1689. And I have copies of this and I am going to leave them with you.

DR. CRAWFORD: Fine sir. Let's get his father before we start.

COL. PICKLE: The next generation was John McCord and he was of County of Tyrone, Ireland, and he died about 1715. He left sons of David, John, William, Robert, Samuel, Benjamin, and James. They came to America about 1720 and 1730 and settled near Chambersburg, Virginia. William McCord died in 1739 in Pennsylvania and he had a son, David McCord, and he was killed by the Indians in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania about 1756. He had children of David, James, Ambrose, Jane, Elizabeth, Margaret, Joseph and Mary. James and David McCord were captured by the Indians in an Indian raid on Fort McCord in April of 1756. They remained with the Indians for several years before escaping.

Later both owned property in southwest Virginia and in Washington County, Tennessee at Jonesboro. David came to Williamson County, Tennessee in 1801 by way of Madison, Kentucky. David McCord was married first to Mary Allison and he had children of John, James, Samuel, Allison, David, Charlie, Mary, William, Robert, and Joseph. The second marriage was to

Elizabeth Cowden. They had children of Abner, Harvey, Cowden, Allen, Newton, and Allen N. McCord married Jane Jordan. Their children were Elizabeth Ann, Thomas Newton, William Harrison, and Mary Lavanna. Then he married Mary Jane Overby. There were no children to that marriage. Thomas Newton McCord was born on the 3rd day of December, 1836 and he died on the 24th day of November, 1889. He married first Tabitha Hights. They had children of Dr. William Allen McCord and Alice Jane McCord. The second marriage was to Mrs. Martha L. Hoskins. Their children were Mary McCord and Charles Thomas McCord. And his third marriage on 25th day of June, 1876 was to Iva Steele. Of this marriage their children were born Price Steele McCord, Jim Nance McCord, and Ed Cooper McCord, twins, Howardva Lavernia McCord, Hannie Lee McCord, Annie Kitty McCord and Thomas Newton McCord.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which one was your mother?

COL. PICKLE: Hannie Lee McCord Pickle.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you get to see your Uncle Jim Nance McCord often when you were growing up?

COL. PICKLE: Yes, at least two or three times a year. One other recollection I have of his conducting an auction and this was in Shelbyville. It was a lot sale about 1922 before the Pickles bought an automobile and we went two days to this sale in a buggy and he was selling lots. It was Thompson's sub-division in Shelbyville, and I followed along as he was riding in a wagon and they would pull the wagon from one lot to another. Several times during the sale Jim would stop

the auction to remind the prospective buyers of the precaution that had been taken to insure that this would always be a high class sub-division. There was recorded in the bill of sale on these lots that no house could be built that cost less than \$5,000.

DR . CRAWFORD: Which was a good deal of money then! (Laughter)

COL. PICKLE: Not to insure very much today!

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you notice him changing any as time went on? I know he became better known around the country.

COL. PICKLE: No, he was always, I repeat again, a "gentleman".

DR. CRAWFORD: He did well during the depression, didn't he?

COL. PICKLE: I never heard him saying. He was financially solvent at all times.

DR. CRAWFORD: And his business certainly seemed successful?

COL. PICKLE: Yes. Of course, the first business he was in went broke.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that the book store?

COL. PICKLE: The book store. But out of that he acquired the greatest blessing he ever had because he got his education in that book store.

DR. CRAWFORD: That seems to me to be one of the most admirable things about him that he became the highest ranking official in the state, succeeding as he did without having the

benefits that other people have had in formal education.

COL. PICKLE: He had about a fifth grade education.

DR. CRAWFORD: What were his favorite kinds of reading?

COL. PICKLE: History, biography.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he continue that interest throughout life?

COL. PICKLE: As long as he lived.

DR. CRAWFORD: Apparently owning a book store can be a good way to get an education and a good start in life.

COL. PICKLE: Sometimes you don't make a living at it!

DR. CRAWFORD: Col. Pickle, do you know anything about your Uncle's ownership in the book store? Do you know how old he might have been or what kind of reading he did?

COL. PICKLE: I do not know the exact age, but I do know he was a very young age. One book that he read or one poem that he read and quoted often in his life was Oh, In Silence. I don't remember the name of the author, but I do have a copy of the book.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he in his teens when he owned that book store?

COL. PICKLE: If it wasn't in his teens, it was in his early twenties, and I expect it was probably in his teens.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he live at Lewisburg then?

COL. PICKLE: Yes, his brother actually owned the book store, and let him run it.

DR. CRAWFORD: He worked a while in a hardware store, didn't he?

COL. PICKLE: In Shelbyville, yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Have you ever heard him mention that job?

COL. PICKLE: I've heard him tell about it, yes. It was the hardware store on the square there in Shelbyville. As Mr. Lewis said, he went in and drove the buggy for his father who was County Court Clerk and then worked in the store. I don't know how long he did that.

DR. CRAWFORD: What did you know about his activity in the newspaper business when you were young?

COL. PICKLE: Well, he published the Marshall Gazette.

DR. CRAWFORD: Which is still in publication?

COL. PICKLE: Still in publication today, I believe. He was always very interested in the affairs of Marshall County and dubbed Lewisburg as the best little town in the world.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was a strong supporter of his county, then?

COL. PICKLE: Right.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he seem to enjoy newspaper work?

COL. PICKLE: I never heard him talk too much about the newspaper. He wrote editorials for it at times and supervised the management of it. But he was always away a considerable amount of time, especially while I knew him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, since his business frequently took him

away I suppose he had people to do most of the work on the paper.

COL. PICKLE: Yes, that is correct.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know how he happened to get started in politics?

COL. PICKLE: Well, I would say he was born into it because the minister in conducting a funeral of his uncle, Joe E. Steele, of Shelbyville, said, "The chapter is written and the books are closed and so is the Steele Family in Bedford County, Tennessee." Joe E. Steele was his uncle and the minister also said that the Steele and the McCord Family had been in politics in Bedford County for a hundred years.

DR. CRAWFORD: So he had an interest in politics at the County level first.

COL. PICKLE: Even when he was in grade school living at home, I've heard him tell about being a member of a debating team that they had working there around Hart's Chapel where he went to school.

DR. CRAWFORD: That's where he picked up his speaking experience?

COL. PICKLE: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: How well did you keep up with your uncle after you went away into military service?

COL. PICKLE: We had regular correspondence by mail and every time that I came home on furlough or leave-- if I didn't get a chance to see him, he came to see me.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you the only nephew he had in the service?

COL. PICKLE: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What kind of letter writer or correspondent was he? I know he must have been very busy then.

COL. PICKLE: Well, he was never too busy to sit down and write me just a chatty newsletter.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he hand-write or type those letters?

COL. PICKLE: Most of them were typed. In fact I don't believe I ever had... I guess I had better say all of them were typed.

DR. CRAWFORD: He sounds sort of like a newspaperman.

COL. PICKLE: His handwriting was very shaky.

DR. CRAWFORD: How was his health at this time?

COL. PICKLE: Excellent.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now he was elected governor while you were away at war.

COL. PICKLE: He was elected to Congress first.

DR. CRAWFORD: What about his local political career now?

COL. PICKLE: He was a magistrate of Marshall County for 29 years I believe, and Mayor of Lewisburg for 26 years. That is all listed here in this...

DR. CRAWFORD: They must have had a lot of confidence in him for to be gone as much as he had to in his

auctioneering work to still serve as Mayor of the town.

MR. LEWIS: He also taught Sunday School class at the Presbyterian Church for I guess, 35 years or longer.

DR. CRAWFORD: Talking about the Marshall County days, was he a member of the Presbyterian Church here in Lewisburg, sir?

MR. LEWIS: Yes sir.

COL. PICKLE: Now that was the Southern Presbyterian Church.

DR. CRAWFORD: About how long did he serve in the church and what did he do?

COL. PICKLE: He was a member from a very early age. He was a deacon later and an elder and he also taught a Sunday School class.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you ever attend his Sunday School classes?

COL. PICKLE: I had come home from Washington and he asked me to come over and teach his class one Sunday.

I don't think I ever sat in a Sunday School class that he taught. I have heard him speak in many churches, but I don't think I ever sat through a Sunday School lesson that he taught.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, they must have liked his Sunday School teaching to have kept him as long as they did.

COL. PICKLE: Definitely.

MR. LEWIS: No person could have disliked Jim McCord. His

political enemies liked him.

DR. CRAWFORD: His political enemies liked him too?

MR. LEWIS: As good a friends as for him as far as he was concerned.

COL. PICKLE: The Nashville Tennessean was one of his strongest opponents during his political career. I have there in a Congressional Record an editorial that they wrote on his death, which is highly complimentary.

DR. CRAWFORD: That is a compliment to him. Do you know why the Nashville Tennessean opposed him?

COL. PICKLE: He was supported by Mr. Crump and they were opposed to him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Then it was not personal opposition to himself?

COL. PICKLE: No.

DR. CRAWFORD: You have heard him speak to church groups, Col. Pickle. What sort of speaker was he to a religious group?

COL. PICKLE: He was sincere, very moving in stating his own personal beliefs of what he was talking about.

He was a very capable student of the Bible and read it very regularly and he not only taught it but he lived it.

DR. CRAWFORD: What sort of information did he use in his sermons? Did he quote scriptures, give examples or tell stories?

COL. PICKLE: He used stories to illustrate the point.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he invited to speak to other churches?

COL. PICKLE: Oh yes. The denomination was no barrier. He spoke to any of them.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was very popular with other religious groups.

COL. PICKLE: Other religious groups, yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know how much speaking he had done around the state when he entered politics? Had he traveled much by then?

COL. PICKLE: Well, he had traveled--yes, as an auctioneer all over the state many times. He became known back in about '25 or '27. I think it was the Nashville Banner here that conducted an oldTennessee contest in which participants were invited from the counties all over the state to speak, and they chose regional speakers from that group and he came here to Nashville. I remember before we had a radio, my uncle who didn't live far from us, did have one, and we went down because we knew the winner of that "Know Tennessee Contest" was going to speak on the radio. He came in second in that speech.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he listen to the radio much himself?

COL. PICKLE: He was no heavy fan of it. I'm sure he did listen to it--probably the news broadcasts from the markets.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he enjoy any particular kind of music?

MR. LEWIS: He enjoyed about anything.

DR. CRAWFORD: He decided to get beyond local politics and run for Congress. That was the first step,

I believe outside of the county, wasn't it?

COL. PICKLE: He ran for that when he was 65 years old.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that while you were gone to war?

COL. PICKLE: I was in California at the time, at Hamilton Field.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you know about that campaign? I know you weren't there.

COL. PICKLE: I don't think he had any opposition, did he Trab? I think he went in without opposition.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did he like being in Washington?

COL. PICKLE: Well, I was privileged to visit with him twice while he was there and he seemed to be very happy both times. The first time I was there I was in Camp Lee in Virginia going to OCS and got a weekend pass and went up there and called him on the telephone after I got there and I told him the hotel I was staying in and he said I'll be by for you in the morning at 9:30 and we'll go to church. He took me to church and he wanted me to hear the minister who was Peter Marshall.

DR. CRAWFORD: Chaplain of the Senate, wasn't he?

COL. PICKLE: He was later Chaplain of the Senate. At that time he was speaking there in that Presbyterian Church the thing that impressed me so much--the only seat that we could get in the church was on the steps in the balcony--there was one seat in the auditorium itself but it was roped off with red tuille. And they said

that was the seat that President Abraham Lincoln had sat in when he attended that church. Those two things--the name Peter Marshall at that time did not mean anything to me. I remembered those two other events much more.

DR. CRAWFORD: I have read some excellent sermons that were his that were put in the Congressional Record.

COL. PICKLE: I've read A Man Called Peter and several other books too about him written by his wife.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know...

MR. LEWIS: ...About his traveling and selling flour in Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas?

COL. PICKLE: Yes, he was a traveling salesman there. I've heard one story that he told about his traveling days.

DR. CRAWFORD: When he was selling flour in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

MR. LEWIS: He traveled all over the Southwest.

DR. CRAWFORD: He had a large territory in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

COL. PICKLE: He also made Memphis his stop about that time.

MR. LEWIS: He called on the wholesale people, see.

COL. PICKLE: I don't know what he was selling, but he was selling in Memphis. I've heard him tell this story that he went into a retail store of some kind and he told the mer-

chant his name of McCord and the man said, "I'm busy right now, but sit down, I want to talk to you." Jim waited until the merchant came to him and he said, "Now what I want to talk to you about is I never heard that name McCord but once before." And he said, "I was with the Forrest Brigade of Calvary and we were in a battle here in Memphis and the General had issued orders that anyone who broke my ranks would be shot. We were riding and there was a man by the name of McCord that was riding right in front of me and he was shot and fell off his horse, and I broke ranks and got down and pulled him off the road so that he wouldn't be trampled on by the others. You are the first man that I ever heard of with that name since then." Jim said, "That was my father."

DR. CRAWFORD: That was a real coincidence, wasn't it? This man from Memphis?

COL. PICKLE: Memphis. I don't know what the man's name was. I'm sure Jim did and kept up with him, but I heard him tell that story many times.

DR. CRAWFORD: There are a lot of people--were a lot of people--who served with Forrest who were in Memphis of course.

COL. PICKLE: Right. Forrest had the railroad from Iuka, Mississippi up to Memphis to protect. That was his assignment.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you know about Governor McCord's father's service under Forrest?

COL. PICKLE: I do not know how long he was in. He was a private. He was taken prisoner at this battle in Memphis. They always referred to it as a skirmish--I don't think it was a big battle. He was taken prisoner and brought back to Murfreesboro and interned for the duration of the war. One of the guards over him was a Mr. Tune who was a cousin of my grandmother (or a third wife--they were not married at that time.). Tune used to take letters that my grandfather would write and take them back up in Bedford County and deliver them to the family. I used that example several times as to how Tennessee was divided up in that war.

DR CRAWFORD: That was while he was interned in Murfreesboro.

COL PICKLE: As a prisoner. He was then at the war's end sent to Richmond, Virginia for separation and as the discharge shows he returned from that by wagon train and I've heard Jim tell many times that he was given three days' rations to make the trip on.

DR. CRAWFORD: Now how far did he have to travel on that trip?

COL. PICKLE: From Richmond, Virginia back to Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know why your uncle Jim McCord decided to leave Congress and run for Governor?

COL. PICKLE: I think it had always been his life-long ambition to be governor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Yes sir, Mr. Lewis, what do you remember about

his decision to become governor of Tennessee?

MR. LEWIS: Well, he was planning on running for '38.

DR. CRAWFORD: Against Gordon Browning?

MR. LEWIS: Against Browning. So Prentice Cooper was practicing law there in Lewisburg and was City Attorney for Lewisburg. Governor McCord was then Mayor McCord of Lewisburg at that time.

DR. CRAWFORD: One was mayor and the other was city attorney.

MR. LEWIS: That's right. So Governor McCord was planning to come to Nashville to announce his campaign for governor that year of '38. Cooper decided ~~that~~ he wanted to run and he jumped up and announced that he was candidate for governor and came to Nashville to announce. Governor McCord knew there was no use in two or both of them to run that year so Governor McCord just waited and he was elected to Congress in '42 and in '44 he ran for governor and was elected and carried every county in the state of Tennessee.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did (Governor McCord) feel ~~that~~ Prentice Cooper knew that he wanted to run in '38?

MR. LEWIS: I'm pretty sure he did. I think he did.

DR. CRAWFORD: He felt when Prentice Cooper was going to announce anyway that there was no use for two of them to run?

MR. LEWIS: That's right, there wasn't any use for both of them to run.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he confident that Browning could be defeated that year?

MR. LEWIS: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Why did he feel that Browning could be?

MR. LEWIS: Well, Browning had gotten into trouble with the legislature and all and had passed a piece of legislation called "The Unit Bill". They passed it, but the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional and then when Browning announced for governor in '38 it was a kind of foregone conclusion that he wasn't going to win.

DR. CRAWFORD: Well, with Shelby County Crump machine against him it would have been difficult at any rate.

MR. LEWIS: That's right. Certainly would.

DR. CRAWFORD: After one year I think he had gotten 60,000 votes out of Shelby County--Gordon Browning had when he ran in '36.

MR. LEWIS: When he defeated Burgin Dossett.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did Governor McCord ever have any ill feeling toward Prentice Cooper as a result of his not being able to run?

MR. LEWIS: Oh no, none whatsoever.

DR. CRAWFORD: They remained friends?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, very close.

DR. CRAWFORD: Col. Pickle, what contact did you have with your uncle while he was governor?

COL. PICKLE: I returned to Tennessee in March, '46 and was employed first in the Department of Welfare with the rehabilitation for the blind. And was later moved to the Adjutant General's office as the director of office of War Records. During that time I did visit as a usual thing on Friday morning. I went to the Governor's office and had a visit with him, and at various other times we would see each other.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he have to put in a great deal of time at the work of being governor then?

COL. PICKLE: I would say it was full time.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you meet any of his staff or cabinet members?

COL. PICKLE: Well, I met his secretary, who was Sarah Willey. She had been with him in Marshall County and had been with him all the time and she was with him in Washington. I also knew Fred Graves who was front office. I knew General Hilton Butler.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was he the Commander of the National Guard?

COL. PICKLE: Yes, he was the state Adjutant General. I did know Bed Tarkley, he was a legal advisor. Bed and I had gone to high school together down in Shelbyville.

DR. CRAWFORD: While your uncle was governor, he lived in Nashville during the week, didn't he?

COL. PICKLE: Yes, and he was here most of the time on the weekends.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he get back to Marshall County often?

COL. PICKLE: I could not say how often; I know he went back, but he certainly didn't go back every weekend.

MR. LEWIS: Every time he got a chance! (Laughter) If he had the time to spare. He was a full-time governor.

DR. CRAWFORD: Let's see, he left the governor's office in '49, didn't he?

COL. PICKLE: Right.

DR. CRAWFORD: You were still in Nashville, then? You didn't leave until after the Korean War started?

COL. PICKLE: That's right. I was called to active duty in September, '50.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did he move back to Lewisburg then after he left the governor's office?

COL. PICKLE: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: He was not married the second time then, was he?

COL. PICKLE: No. His first wife died. They were married 53 years I believe. He came to Nashville again after that.

DR. CRAWFORD: How often were you in contact with him after you went back in to service in the Korean War?

COL. PICKLE: As I said, I was on duty here in Tennessee in the state headquarters here in Nashville. I

saw him once or twice every week I guess while he was here. He was always very generous to invite me to have lunch with him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Where did you have lunch with him?

COL. PICKLE: Hermitage Hotel.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that a favorite place of his?

COL. PICKLE: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: When did you go to Washington?

COL. PICKLE: In June of 1959.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you continue to correspond with him after that?

COL. PICKLE: Oh yes. He came to Washington a couple of times to visit us after his second wife died.

DR. CRAWFORD: Have you kept your correspondence with him?

COL. PICKLE: No, I didn't .

DR. CRAWFORD: Do you know when he stopped doing his work as an auctioneer? Did he ever do any later in life?

COL. PICKLE: His last auction as an auctioneer was in December of 1950. He was in Montreal, Canada I believe it was, and he was selling Jersey cows. He had fallen on Thanksgiving morning--had slipped in the bath tub and struck his head. And he said that morning when he got up he had never had such a throbbing bad headache as bad in his life as he did and was there for that auction and he had no stand-in. And he went through with the job and returned to Nashville, and he was admitted to Vanderbilt Hospital the first week of

January 1951 and had a blood clot removed from his brain. I think that was the last professional auction work that he had. He sold charitable-- big brothers' corners for the paper sales and all like that. He did those I suppose as long as he lived.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you remember about his style as an auctioneer?

COL. PICKLE: Very decidedly different from the typical auctioneer today. Because he made it a point to pronounce every word and every price in a voice that could be understood. He had no sing-song as an auctioneer.

DR. CRAWFORD: It is different from any you hear.

COL. PICKLE: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you in Washington when he died?

COL. PICKLE: Yes. I was.

DR. CRAWFORD: Were you suprised at the time?

COL. PICKLE: No, I had been here on a visit just two or three weeks before and had seen him at the house and I knew then he was a very sick man.

DR. CRAWFORD: Did you return for the funeral?

COL. PICKLE: Oh yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: Was that at Lewisburg?

COL. PICKLE: Yes. At Lone Oak Cemetery.

DR. CRAWFORD: What do you remember about the funeral?

COL. PICKLE: To be honest I have no recollection of it.
It was in a funeral home, wasn't it Trabue?

MR. LEWIS: Yes.

DR. CRAWFORD: What are the strongest memories that you have of your uncle Jim Nance McCord?

COL. PICKLE: A piece of advice that he gave me one night over the telephone on the Sunday before I went to work for the state of Tennessee the next morning. He called me long distance from Lewisburg. I was out at my mother and father's home there in Bedford County and he said, "Tom, you are going to work tomorrow." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "You know I got you that job." I said, "Yes sir, and I am deeply appreciative of it."

DR. CRAWFORD: Which job were you referring to, sir?

COL. PICKLE: Purchasing Clerk in the state Purchasing Department. He said, "Now I got you that job, but it is going to be up to you to keep it. And I am going to give you a piece of advice that I have tried to follow all my life and I found it paid off. You will never have to explain that which you do not say."

DR. CRAWFORD: Sounds like very good advice.

COL. PICKLE: Kept me out of several run-ins.

DR. CRAWFORD: You had several offers, didn't you sir?

COL. PICKLE: Yes, I had another. Jim's brother, Tom, my uncle and my father had some brothers and some half-brothers.

DR. CRAWFORD: You had a great deal of respect for his advice and counsel, didn't you?

COL. PICKLE: Well, I loved him as a man, as an uncle.

DR. CRAWFORD: How did other people respond to him?

COL. PICKLE: Well, I think even those who opposed him, still loved him.

DR. CRAWFORD: Is there anything else about him you'd like to get on this record of your personal recollections of him, Col. Pickle?

COL. PICKLE: I remember so pleasantly the 11 years when he was married to Mrs. Sula Sheely. I had the privilege of attending the wedding in the governor's mansion and she immediately became a part of the family and we all loved her.

DR. CRAWFORD: How do you spell her first name, sir?

COL. PICKLE: S-U-L-A, I believe it is.

DR. CRAWFORD: Sula Sheely. Was he living in Lewisburg then?

COL. PICKLE: He was living here in Nashville--he was Commissioner of Conservation.

DR. CRAWFORD: Are there any stories you remember that would reveal anything especially about the kind of person he was--any incidents?

COL. PICKLE: Well, he was just a plain and down to earth person. I've heard him tell many times about the stroll that he and Bert Hunter took around the square in Lewisburg on the first Monday in April back in the thirties. They envisioned organizing the registration of the Tennessee Walking Horse. They did start it off. I'm sure it was designed to be patterned in many ways after the registration of the American Jersey Cattle Association that he was familiar

DR. CRAWFORD: What sort of governor do you consider him to have been?

COL. PICKLE: Well, it would be very difficult for me to evaluate that without to first say that I am a little biased in my opinion. I thought he was excellent. I think his greatest aim and ambition has been thwarted by circumstances that have occurred. He devoted his whole main thrust of his term as governor, in my opinion, to the field of education. I remember so well the morning I was sitting in the gallery with my family and heard him outline the 2% sales tax.

DR. CRAWFORD: Tennessee will always be indebted to him for that.

COL. PICKLE: I don't know whether indebted is the word you want to use or not because he pledged 2% sales tax would bring in at least 20 million dollars in new money to go for education. Some of the heads of the Tennessee Education Association were seated in the next seat below me and I heard them say, "Oh if we get that we will never have to ask for money again." History has not kept up. And let me go ahead and put one other thing on record, because I think also this is true. With all the money that has been spent on education in Tennessee today we still make lower scores on SAT tests that we did in 1947.

DR. CRAWFORD: That is a matter of record. Yes.

COL. PICKLE: I do believe it is the truth. I am not running for office. (Laughter)

DR. CRAWFORD: We are spending more and have not gotten a lot

of things for it.

COL. PICKLE: That was certainly not his goal and ambition.

DR. CRAWFORD: He certainly valued education, didn't he?

COL. PICKLE: Definitely.

DR. CRAWFORD: Col. Pickle, thank you very much.

THIS IS AN ADDITION TO THE INTERVIEW WITH COL. TOM PICKLE. IN THE CON-
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